

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Corps urges safety on the water

HUNTINGTON, WV.....With the Fourth of July weekend upon us, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Huntington District is asking everyone to practice water safety when they are on the water.

Each year in the U.S. there are approximately 6,000 drowning-related deaths. In many cases, the drowning occurs because people under-estimate the power of the water and over-estimate their swimming ability. However, other factors play a role, including abuse of alcohol, hypothermia and neglecting to wear a life jacket.

Shreda Gorum, safety specialist and water safety expert for the Huntington District, encourages those planning on enjoying water-related activities this summer to always remember to wear their life-jacket—just having the life-saving device on board is not enough.

“The Corps of Engineers welcomes visitors from all walks of life to come and enjoy themselves at the beautiful lakes entrusted to our care,” Gorum said. “This year we’re asking all

(more)

of our visitors to partner with us and be Water Safety Ambassadors. We're encouraging everyone to wear life jackets when on the water and we're asking everyone to pass the word along.”

Huntington District Commander Colonel Dana Hurst also takes water safety seriously and has taken a leadership role in reducing the number of water-related accidents and drowning. “On May 25, 2007, I enacted a ban on cliff diving/jumping in Corps-managed lakes located within the Huntington District,” Hurst said. “Cliff jumping/diving is a reckless and potentially dangerous activity that has always been strongly discouraged on Huntington District lakes.”

Over the next several weeks, the Huntington District will increase boat patrols and issue warnings to those violating the ban. The ban establishes guidelines that state a person cannot enter the water of a Corps-managed lake within the Huntington District from a height greater than one’s own height.

“I have posted warnings at Huntington District projects alerting users of the dangers associated with cliff jumping/diving and advising them of the ban,” says Hurst.

Failure to heed warnings may result in citation with a penalty of up to \$5,000 or federal imprisonment.

As a reminder, Huntington District lakes where the ban is now in effect include: Alum Creek, Deer Creek, Delaware, Dillon, North Branch of Kokosing and Paint Creek Lakes in Ohio; Beech Fork, Bluestone, Burnsville, East Lynn, R.D. Bailey, Summersville, and Sutton Lakes in West Virginia; Dewey, Fishtrap, Grayson, Paintsville and Yatesville Lakes in Kentucky; and John W. Flannagan and North Fork of Pound Lakes in Virginia.

With the summer recreation season in full swing, the Huntington District asks that everyone use a common sense approach when enjoying our beautiful lakes and recreational facilities. Be safe, wear your life jacket, never swim alone, especially in unfamiliar waters, don’t dive into rivers or lakes, and most importantly remember that water recreation and alcohol don’t mix.

Visit our water safety website at <http://watersafety.usace.army.mil> to find water safety tips, a list of water-safety education events throughout the country and many interactive games and activities for everyone to enjoy.

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